



Mayor & Council Meeting Date: November 1, 2021

Agenda Item Type: Presentation

Department: PW - Traffic & Transportation

Responsible Staff: Emad Elshafei

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## Subject

Update on Vision Zero and Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plans

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## Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Mayor and Council receive an update on the Vision Zero Action Plan and the Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plans, and approve adjustments to the timeline for Action Items 5, 16, 17, 18 and 27 as shown in this staff report.

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## Discussion

This is the fifth Vision Zero quarterly report for the Mayor and Council and provides a status update for each of the Vision Zero action items after fifteen months since the adoption of the Vision Zero Action Plan on July 6, 2020. The update represents progress made on action items during the first quarter of FY 2022, roughly during the period between July 1, 2021, and September 30, 2021. In addition to activities such as organizing, scheduling, and other preliminary steps in the implementation process, five action items have been completed. The City's new Vision Zero Coordinator, Bryan Barnett-Woods, started in August and was able to pick up from where his predecessor left off without much loss in the transition. This memorandum includes a summary of the progress made on action items, coordination efforts within City staff from different departments, and engagement with external groups and agencies. It also provides an update on the status of both the Bikeway master Plan and the Pedestrian Master Plan.

Based on the progress made so far for the individual action items, staff recommend revisions to the Vision Zero Action Plan timeline for the consideration of the Mayor and Council.

### Summary of the Progress Table

The Progress Table (Attachment A) shows the status and progress of each action item since the plan's adoption. These action items also are identified in the Action Plan timeline (Attachment B), approved by Mayor and Council in July 2020. Per the timeline, many action items rely on the findings of the crash data analysis. This item has since been completed, however many of the action items that are dependent upon the analysis and less progress on these action items has been made.

Of the Action Plan's 30 Action Items, staff has completed five action items:

1. Crash Analysis / Predictive analysis
19. Safety Awareness Training for City Employees
21. Appoint Vision Zero Coordinator
22. Establish Cross Departmental Vision Zero Task Force
25. Create Vision Zero Webpage

Staff continues work on the following Ongoing Action Items:

12. Expand Traffic Law Enforcement and Distracted Driving Detection Program
13. Collaboration with Court System
14. Enhance Police Driver Training
24. Ensure Fairness and Equality throughout Vision Zero Projects
26. Public Collision Data
28. Coordinate with Peer Learning Opportunities

Over the past quarter, staff has made progress on the following Action Items:

1. Crash Analysis / Predictive Analysis (complete)
8. Create Pedestrian Master Plan
9. Expand Network of Safe Bicycle Facilities
16. Create Comprehensive Outreach Strategy
23. Change Policies, Regulations, and Laws
27. Improve Crash Data Collection

The most significant progress made during this quarter is under action item #1, the completion of the crash data analysis from Montgomery County's crash dataset. This analysis will serve as the base for many other action items that depend on the information available in this data. Also, staff put out a survey to establish a baseline for the public's perception of crash causes, impacted parties, and priorities of Vision Zero Action. Participants identified places in the city where they feel unsafe from a transportation perspective.

Action item # 16 is to develop a comprehensive outreach strategy. Transportation and public information office staff have internally coordinated to brainstorm and propose additional outreach efforts for Vision Zero. This has included new social media messaging for safe walking and driving – especially while traveling at night and outlining a new webpage tool that can be used for additional engagement. It is expected that this will be available to the public this winter.

Staff has also started to make progress regarding an assessment of the existing policies that could be refined to better support multimodal transportation and Vision Zero goals. While the pedestrian master plan is the recommended process to update pedestrian related policies, staff has also reviewed the "Guidelines for Neighborhood Traffic Management," and the "Comprehensive Transportation Review," manual. These documents help guide the placement of transportation infrastructure within existing neighborhoods and through the development

process. It is expected over the next six months, staff will identify trade-offs between modes when implementing these policies, as well as identify additional policies for review and possible update.

Lastly, staff has initiated work to improve the traffic crash data collection process. While analyzing the 2016-2020 ARCS crash data, staff identified opportunities for improved data collections and assessment. This could involve expanding the data set to include all injury crashes, as well as opportunities to simplify joining the motorist and non-motorists crash datasets. Also, in coordination with RPAC, staff will assess how to best incorporate the service requests that don't have formal reports. This includes incidents where police were requested to go to a crash site but did not file a formal report. This data may provide more insight to "near miss" incidents, or incidents where a crash took place, but is otherwise unreported.

#### **Pedestrian Master Plan Update:**

Staff has initiated the planning process for the City of Rockville Pedestrian Master Plan, action item #8. In coordination with the Rockville Pedestrian Advocacy Committee (RPAC) and a RPAC pedestrian masterplan subcommittee, staff has developed an outline of the master plan, including a proposed vision and plan goals, drafted by RPAC. Furthermore, staff has coordinated with the public information office and GIS staff to develop a project website and an interactive map the public can "mark up" to provide comments regarding desired pedestrian pathways, pedestrian priority areas, and points of potential improvements. This website is expected to be published in late 2021 and will be available throughout the plan process. The expected timeline for the Pedestrian Master Plan, which is 12 months earlier than the original July 2024 completion date, is as follows:

- August – October 2021: Plan outline and scheduling
- October 2021 – January 2022: Research and best practices
- January – April 2022: Plan drafting
- May – July 2022: Initial public comment
- September 2022 – March 2023: Planning Commission review and 2<sup>nd</sup> drafting
- May 2023: Presentation to Mayor and Council
- May - July 2023: Plan Approval and finalization

In addition to proposing new pedestrian facilities consistent with Vision Zero, staff plans to include an action item to update and replace the 2008 Synthesis of Pedestrian Policies, the Sidewalk Prioritization Policies, and the pedestrian elements of the Complete Streets Policies. Finally, staff plans to develop "pedestrian priority areas" in which existing level-of-service, volume, and traffic calming policies are refined to prioritize pedestrian movements. Next steps for this project include additional outreach and solicitation of recommendations and comments for underrepresented populations in the city, including disability rights groups, the county Commission on Aging, and low-income groups.

**Bikeway Master Plan Update:**

The Vision Zero Action Plan has set a goal of building all bike facilities proposed in the City's Bikeway Master Plan by 2028 (action item #9). City staff continue to build and place shared-roadway bicycle signage throughout Rockville. Presently, approximately 50% of the proposed shared-roadways from the Bikeway Master Plan have signs indicated roadways as such. Staff has set a goal to complete 75% of these facilities for FY22 and will continue to work closely with the Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee (RBAC) to incorporate their input. Over the next quarter, staff will develop a list of bike-lane projects that can be implemented without acquisition of additional rights-of-way or requiring extensive roadway reconstruction, i.e., these bike lane projects are those that can be completed at a quicker pace than other larger-scale bicycle facilities. Currently, construction is taking place along Maryland Avenue and Baltimore Road, both projects will include new bicycling facilities; bicycle lanes and a shared-use path, respectively.

**Internal Staff Coordination**

Staff from Rockville's Police Department, Public Information Office, and the Department of Public Works meet monthly to discuss the feasibility of action items and coordinate on how to accomplish Vision Zero goals within the city. The Vision Zero Task Force serves as the first point of partnership between the City's departments. From this task force, working groups for engineering, education/outreach, and enforcement were formed to focus on completing specific action items.

Engineering: Many engineering action items rely on the findings of the crash analysis, which was completed during the last quarter of FY 2021. The recently completed crash analysis has identified 12 roadway segments as part of the "High Risk Network," which are defined as roads with multiple crashes within the 2016-2020 data set. Over the next six months, staff will identify potential roadway improvements that can help reduce the total number of traffic crashes and the severity of those crashes. Transportation staff will continue to make progress on action items # 3-6.

Education/Outreach: A communication and outreach strategy has been completed and incorporates crash data analysis to identify at-risk populations for specific messaging. The Public Information and Community Engagement Division continues to educate the community at large about Vision Zero principles and process, which will highlight ongoing City engineering, enforcement, and education efforts, as well as including ways the community can be involved in the process. Part of this strategy also is to investigate the public's perception of Vision Zero and crash data through a survey, which will guide outreach efforts in the future. A new website that can better engage with residents will be developed to provide a point of consistent online engagement throughout this project. Lastly, this element includes collaboration with Montgomery County and public schools to carry out transportation safety education with students. This has been impacted by COVID-19 and the remote learning which took place over the 2020-2021 academic year.

Enforcement: Transportation safety remains a priority for the RCPD. Some limitations exist due to the Covid-19 pandemic for both the RCPD, as well as the court system. As a result, some tasks are not being conducted at pre-COVID levels. Nevertheless, RCPD has been diligent about focusing enforcement details on specific areas of the city, applying for grants for additional resources, and promoting safe driving and pedestrian behaviors of RCPD employees through training, when applicable. Patrol teams and traffic unit continue to focus efforts on specific locations and issues based on collision data and community complaints. The Police Department received a grant from the state for FY 22 to support progress for action item #12, Expand Traffic Law Enforcement And Distracted Driving Detection Program. Additionally, action item #13, Collaborating With The Court System, is moving forward. However, courts are operating at reduced capacity. Police staff provide judges with information regarding high-incident area violations when applicable.

### **Coordination with Other Groups**

This Action Plan requires aligning policies and practices at all levels of government (City, County, and State) and across City commissions and committees, making safety the highest priority for all roadways.

The Traffic and Transportation Commission, the Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee (RBAC), and the Rockville Pedestrian Advocacy Committee (RPAC): The Traffic and Transportation Commission has been kept up to date about the City's Vision Zero efforts. The most recent Traffic & Transportation Commission meeting (September 2021) was a joint meeting with RBAC and RPAC. During this meeting, there was substantive discussion for the need for monthly traffic crash reporting from the Rockville Police Department.

Both RBAC and RPAC will continue to look for opportunities to provide community outreach to cyclists and pedestrians with respect to social equity, and to gain more participation from traditionally under-represented groups who may face a disproportionate risk for experiencing a crash resulting in a severe injury or fatality. RPAC also has provided input on several projects in the City related to Vision Zero and pedestrian safety. This includes participating in the development of the Pedestrian Master Plan (action item #8), and most recently, being requested to provide priority sidewalk recommendations (action item #7), which will be collected and identified over the next quarter. RBAC also has provided input on several bike projects as they relate to Vision Zero, specifically on segments of shared roadways as part of implementing the Bikeway Master Plan and the final placement of bike racks at the City's parks (action item #9). Staff continues to work with RBAC to plan the next phase of shared-roadway facilities as proposed in the Bikeway Master Plan.

Montgomery County: Staff continues regular communication with Montgomery County through its Vision Zero Coordinator to discuss how the City can partner with the County to implement action items similar to those already being implemented by the County. Montgomery County is currently working on their 10-year Vision Zero Action Plan, as well as a pedestrian master plan. The Vision Zero Coordinator for the City is a part of the working group for the 10-year Vision Zero Action Plan. The County recently published a map of Pedestrian Level of Comfort (PLOC),

which creates an index for all roadways in the County and scores the “comfort” that a pedestrian would experience while walking on these roads. Due to time and capacity constraints, the City of Rockville was not included in this analysis. City staff are investigating the data and time requirements necessary for a PLOC map and, if feasible, include one as part of the Pedestrian Master Plan.

Staff regularly attend Montgomery County’s Fatal Collision Review Team to review crashes. These crashes are not solely in the city but give insight to the underlying causes to various types of crashes. This team reviews police reports, other documents and video footage for human, vehicle, environmental, and design/engineering factors to determine how our Vision Zero efforts can learn from the reviewed crash. Additionally, Montgomery County is a partner to the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) in their effort to promote transportation safety to school-aged cyclists and pedestrians. However, with the Covid-19 pandemic, there are limitations to the types of programs that MCPS can offer. Most of the programs were delayed or suspended, although a Pedestrian Walk-Audit tool kit was released, and a web presentation was provided. This tool kit is also available through the City’s website. Staff continues to coordinate with Montgomery County on these initiatives, and will help brainstorm ideas and promote virtual and in-person events going forward.

Staff also is working with Montgomery County to establish review criteria for various engineering action items. Many of the engineering action items, such as Review of Transit Stops (action item #3), Evaluate Crossings and Unsignalized Intersections (action item #4), and Improve Traffic Signals (action item #6), involve establishing an inventory of field assets and examining the quality of each asset in order to prioritize actions and will be investigated further over the next quarter. With the County’s guidance, staff is exploring review standards from the County’s Vision Zero master data and the safe routes to school program, along with State guidelines. Montgomery County recently completed a bus stop audit along MD 355 between Country Club Drive and Wootton Parkway. Recommendations from this analysis were shared with the Maryland state Highway Administration.

Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA): Because not all streets within Rockville are under the jurisdiction of the City, staff works closely with the Maryland Department of Transportation’s State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) and the County to ensure that we all have a consistent approach to transportation safety, while also advocating for the specific action items outlined in the Vision Zero Action Plan. City staff will continue this coordination through another meeting to be held in the winter.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Government (MWCOG): Because people traveling in Rockville may not reside or work in Rockville, coordination with MWCOG allows the City to learn and connect with other jurisdictions in the region. Staff regularly attend the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee of MWCOG, as well as other subcommittees, to promote walking and bicycling events such as Car Free Day and Bike to Work Day. These committees offer vital peer learning opportunities for Vision Zero from jurisdictions throughout the region, including Prince George’s County, Arlington County, Washington DC, Loudoun County, and Montgomery County.

**Recommended changes to the Vision Zero Action Plan timeline:**

The Vision Zero Action Items timeline outlines each of the action plan items and the expected dates for implementation and completion. Some of the items have distinct start-and-end dates, such as establishing a Vision Zero Task Force, or updating City road design standards. Other items are ongoing and are accomplished throughout this project, such as collaboration with the County and State, increased traffic safety enforcement, or publishing collision data. While these initial time frames were established with the approval of the Action Plan, the Mayor and Council have the opportunity to revise these timeframes. Updating the timeframes is an important aspect of the project to provide timelines that are reflective of ongoing work and accommodating unanticipated outside events that impact Vision Zero's progress. Staff recommend that the timelines for the following action items be revised.

5. State/Montgomery County/City Project Collaboration

Part of this item is to share information with the County and State to identify high injury areas. As this may change over time, it will be necessary to share this information at regular intervals. Additionally, this item requires the continuous advocacy for roadway improvement projects with the County and State. The timeline should reflect the ongoing nature of this item, and therefore, staff recommend changing the target date of 7/1/2022 to "Ongoing."

16. Create a Comprehensive Outreach Strategy

Staff recommend that this action item be extended an additional six months. While staff has published safety data, tips, and other valuable information, it will be valuable to use the initial findings from the crash data analysis to better focus outreach efforts. Furthermore, a more comprehensive strategy that provides opportunity for constructive engagement and better addresses the nuances between the perceived and actual needs of all road users will be valuable for the Vision Zero in the long term. Therefore, staff recommends changing the target date of 7/1/2021 to 1/1/2022.

17. Join Montgomery County on safe Routes to School Activities

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and remote learning for students that occurred over the 2020-2021 academic year, the County had placed many safe routes to school efforts on hold and is now restarting these efforts. Staff requests an additional six months to coordinate with Montgomery County and their Safe Routes to School program to develop a collaboration agreement and engage with Rockville's student community. Therefore, staff recommends changing the target date of 1/1/2022 to 7/1/2022.

18. Join Montgomery County's On-bike education programs for kids

Similar to the above item, the COVID-19 pandemic and remote learning over the 2020-2021 academic year limited the ability of the County to carry an on-bike education program. Staff request additional time to coordinate with Montgomery County to identify best opportunities for collaboration and to implement an on-bike education

program. Therefore, staff recommends changing the target date of 1/1/2022 to 7/1/2022.

27. Improve Crash Data Collection

Staff recommend that the time for this item be extended an additional year. The initial data analysis provided a limited dataset, which has provided some guidance, however additional information may be valuable to collect. Staff recommend that opportunities to explore where traffic safety improvements have worked also be explored. RPAC is currently leading an effort with the Rockville Police Department to determine how to best collect data for traffic incidents that do not have reports, which may provide additional insight. Therefore, staff recommends changing the target date of 10/1/2021 to 10/1/2022.

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## **Mayor and Council History**

The Mayor and Council adopted a resolution endorsing the development and adoption of a Vision Zero Policy for the City of Rockville on October 15, 2018. Staff provided a presentation and received guidance from the Mayor and Council on the Vision Zero Action Plan on May 4, 2020 and on June 22, 2020. The Mayor and Council Adopted the Vision Zero Action Plan and Action Plan Timeline on July 6, 2020. Mayor and Council has received quarterly update from staff since November 2020.

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## **Boards and Commissions Review**

Staff worked with the Traffic & Transportation Commission, the Rockville Bike Advisory Committee (RBAC), the Rockville Pedestrian Advocacy Committee (RPAC), and the Senior Citizens Commission to review the Vision Zero Action Plan. All groups are regularly informed on the progress of implementing the action items.

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## **Next Steps**

Staff will continue to work on Vision Zero action items per the action item timeline. The next update will be approximately February 1, 2021. The report will consist of a written progress summary, the action item timelines, and an updated Action Plan progress chart. Staff will continue to focus on the Pedestrian Master Plan, and to use the findings and insights gleaned from the crash analysis to advance the other action items.

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## **Attachments**

Action Items Progress Chart - 11-21 (XLSX)

Action Items Timeline - 11-1-2021 (XLSX)